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## Greetings

The CWGL team sends everyone warmest wishes for a peaceful and happy new year. 2008 was an exceptionally busy year for CWGL and 2009 promises the same with forward looking celebrations and strategic thinking on current women's rights issues. In 2009, CWGL turns twenty years young and will plan a number of activities to celebrate not only the history and pioneering work of the Center, but the leadership of founder and executive director, Charlotte Bunch, who will be transitioning to another role at CWGL.

In November of 2008, CWGL staff spent the month in South Africa at a number of different meetings including the [AWID Forum](#), which is written about in detail below. Prior to the AWID Forum, Cynthia Rothschild participated in the [Women Won't Wait](#) steering committee meeting held in Johannesburg, where the group made plans for the coming year. CWGL staff also participated in and helped organize the steering committee meeting of the [Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition](#) (WHRDIC), which took place post AWID Forum. The Coalition strategized for 2009/2010 and discussed next steps for its work. After the WHRDIC meeting, Charlotte Bunch traveled to East London and met with local groups and participated in a 16 Days event hosted by [Masimanyane Women's Support Centre](#). Please continue to visit [CWGL's website](#) for CSW 2009 activities.

## Highlights

### **GEAR Campaign Plans for CSW**

#### **GEAR UP – Building a Stronger United Nations that Works for all Women!**

The Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign is developing advocacy strategies for the upcoming [UN Commission on the Status of Women](#) in March. Since the current General Assembly has agreed to move forward on this idea it is possible that a new structure might be taking shape by next year. A UN Working Group (WG) is developing detailed models of a new women's entity, with a focus on governance, funding, and structure. Once the WG's outline is approved by the Secretary General's office in coming weeks, governments will discuss these options, so women's advocacy at the CSW will be critical to the success of the proposal.

### **CWGL Supports Historic Sexual Rights Effort at United Nations**

CWGL was proud to support the historic UN General Assembly Statement on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity delivered on December 18th at the UN in New York. Supported by 66 countries from all regions, the human rights statement was the first on sexual orientation and gender identity to reach the General Assembly. In condemning killings, torture, arbitrary arrest, and *deprivation of economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to health*, signatories urged all nations to *promote and protect human rights of all persons, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity*, and to end all criminal penalties against people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Spearheaded by a core group of eight states (Argentina, Brazil, Croatia, France, Gabon, Japan, the Netherlands, and Norway), the statement was delivered by Argentina and followed, in a parallel session, by a message of support from Navanetham Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. [GA statement on sexual orientation, gender identity and human rights has now been issued as an official document in all six UN languages](#) (UN document number A/63/635).

## Announcements

Congratulations to [Change for Equality](#), *One Million Signatures Demanding Changes to Discriminatory Laws* in Iran for receiving the [Simone de Beauvoir Award](#).

Breakthrough is proud to present the [5th Tri-Continental Film Festival](#), India 2009. Every year they have endeavored towards expanding the visual platform for human rights issues from the global South.

CWGL congratulates Rhonda Copelon on receiving the [2009 SALT \(Society for American Law Teachers\) Human Rights Award](#) and for her deep human rights vision, work, generosity of spirit, legal and political strategic brilliance, unswerving and courageous advocacy, and her perseverance in the pursuit of justice for all.

[The Global Campaign to Stop Killing and Stoning Women!](#) was launched in November 2007 and is steered by [Women Living Under Muslim Laws](#). The Campaign seeks to end the relentless mis-use of culture, tradition and religion to justify violence against women.

## CWGL at AWID 2008

Margot Baruch (Program Coordinator), Charlotte Bunch, (Executive Director), Cynthia Rothschild (Senior Policy Advisor), and Keely Swan (16 Days Coordinator) participated in the [11th AWID Forum](#) in Cape Town, South Africa. CWGL sponsored events on violence against women, UN gender equality architecture, and women human rights defenders and participated in sessions on sexual rights, multi-generational leadership, violence and conflict, among others. CWGL participated in launches of two new reports: the French version of *Claiming Rights, Claiming Justice: A Guidebook on Women Human Rights Defenders*, and *Listening to Each Other*, co-published by CREA, CWGL and the Youth Coalition based on a jointly-hosted meeting on multigenerational leadership.

To pay tribute to the courage of all women human rights defenders who risk their lives in defense of their rights, and the rights of others, CWGL partnered with Asia Pacific Forum on Women Law and Development, Forum Asia, and the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition in developing a photo exhibit on [16 Defenders for 16 Days](#), which premiered at AWID and can be seen on CWGL's website. In addition, Margot Baruch attended an all day strategy meeting for AWID's Young Feminist Activist (YFA) program and participated in the YFA blog. Keely Swan held a caucus on the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign where activists discussed their current plans and future ideas for the campaign. [READ MORE...](#)

Visit [CWGL at AWID](#) for a list of forum activities. For photos from the Forum, please visit [CWGL's Flickr page](#).

## Actions

[URGENT: Women Human Rights Defender Disfigured and Murdered](#) in Nepal

[Growing demands for protection and guarantee of Shirin Ebadi's civil and political rights](#) in Iran

## Resources

*Listening To Each Other: a Multigenerational Feminist Dialogue* working paper based on the meeting held at CWGL in 2007 sponsored by [CREA](#), CWGL, and the [Youth Coalition](#). Contact CREA for more information.

[UN INSTRAW, \*Filling the Gaps: A Virtual Discussion of Gender, Peace and Security Research\*](#), Summary of Dialogue, October 2008

## 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

Organizing under the theme *Human Rights for Women (→) Human Rights for All: Celebrating 60 Years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, hundreds of organizations from every region of the world participated in the [2008 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign](#). CWGL has heard from groups in 64 countries, and is continuing to receive activity highlights. To read about regional activities from the 2008 campaign, visit [CWGL's program highlights](#) page, and to view pictures, please visit the [16 Days Flickr page](#).

To help CWGL evaluate the 2008 campaign and explore ways to make next year's campaign more effective, please respond to the survey which can be downloaded from the [16 Days homepage](#). Although the 2008 16 Days Campaign marked the end of both UNIFEM's [Say NO to Violence Against Women Campaign](#) as well as the [Every Human Has Rights](#) (UDHR60) Campaign, CWGL is excited to continue building on the momentum of these important efforts in 2009. UNIFEM's Campaign concluded with an astounding 5 million signatures, which demonstrates that the issue of violence against women is truly gaining the attention across the world. Please continue to check the [CWGL website](#) for updates about next year's campaign and join the [16 Days listserv](#) to stay informed! [READ MORE...](#)

## Upcoming Events

- **January 28, 2009:** [Defending and Promoting Human Rights: Women on the Frontline](#), Hina Jilani, Former UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, Rutgers University, NJ
- **March 2-13, 2009:** [53rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women](#), United Nations, NY
- **March 26, 2009:** *25 years of the Laurie-New Jersey Chair in Women's Studies at Douglass College Laurie Chair Legacies: Women's Rights as Human Rights*, Rutgers University, NJ
- **March 2-27, 2009:** [Human Rights Council](#), 10th Session, Geneva

## Contribute

CWGL needs your support to continue our work for women's human rights. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to fund our efforts.

To support CWGL, please [click here](#).

## About Us

The Center for Women's Global Leadership develops and facilitates women's leadership for women's human rights and social justice worldwide. It was founded as a project of Douglass College in 1989 and is a unit of the [Institute for Women's Leadership \(IWL\)](#)—a consortium of women's programs at Rutgers University created to study and promote how and why women lead, and to develop programs that prepare women of all ages to lead effectively.



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